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SC deplores culture of delays in civil trials

Unnecessary adjournments erode public trust in judiciary, Justice Shakeel Ahmad observes

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed regret over the persistent menace of delays and frequent adjournments in civil trials, observing that such practices not only contribute to mounting backlogs, but also erode the efficiency and credibility of the justice system.

"The timely resolution of civil disputes is not merely a statutory entitlement of litigants but also an indispensable attribute of an effective judicial process," observed Justice Shakeel Ahmad while upholding the Lahore High Court's (LHC) May 21 rejection of a plea moved by petitioner Irfan Rasheed.

In an 11-page order, Justice Ahmad noted that academic literature also identifies frequent and unnecessary adjournments as a major cause of delay, resulting in financial and emotional strain on litigants, erosion of public trust in the judiciary, and frustration of the right to timely justice.

The controversy stemmed from the purchase of land measuring 25 kanals by Irfan Rasheed for a consideration of Rs9,000,000, of which Rs3.9 million was paid as earnest money on June 5, 2018. A written agreement was executed, and the property to that extent was transferred in the petitioner's name.

Subsequently, the respondents declined to perform the remaining obligations. The petitioner instituted a suit against the respondents wherein an interim injunction was granted. In parallel, the respondents filed a suit for declaration and cancellation of the agreement, which was decreed in their favour on July 18, 2019.

Thereafter, the petitioner invoked the provisions of Section 12(2) of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (CPC), seeking annulment of the judgment and decree, alleging fraud and misrepresentation, and contending that the order and decree were obtained in connivance with other respondents.

The respondents contested the application through their written reply, while the trial court, on Jan 29, dismissed the application by invoking the provisions of Order XVII Rule 3 CPC. The appellate court upheld the dismissal on April 12. The constitutional petition before the LHC met the same fate, being dismissed in limine.

Citing the 2015 Rana Tanveer Khan case, Justice Ahmad recalled that the Supreme Court had emphatically stressed the need for expeditious trials and held that only "reasonable adjournments" should be granted, while delaying tactics of litigants must be firmly discouraged.

Likewise, in the 2020 Moon Enterprises case, the apex court underscored the need for stricter enforcement by trial courts, placing particular emphasis on issuing clear warnings regarding the consequences of non-production of evidence within the timeframe fixed by the court, including the closure of evidence.

Furthermore, in the 1976 Settlement Authority case, the Supreme Court observed that adjournments sought by proxy counsel, particularly in the absence of the party or principal counsel, were generally disfavoured.

All the above-cited precedents, Justice Ahmad noted, underscore the importance of active and diligent participation by litigants in judicial proceedings. Repeated adjournments for producing evidence defeat the very object of Rule 3 of the CPC.

Justice Ahmad clarified that once sufficient opportunities have been granted, the right to produce evidence stands closed, and the court must proceed to decide the case on the available record.

In the 1986 Gul Hassan case, the Supreme Court held that where a party consistently fails to produce evidence despite availing multiple adjournments, such delays are impermissible and justify dismissal of the case. The purpose, the judge said, is to curb procrastination in judicial proceedings and to ensure that a party who fails to discharge its burden does not prolong litigation indefinitely.

Justice Ahmad emphasised that every litigant is entitled to a reasonable opportunity to present their case, but such entitlement cannot be construed as a licence for endless adjournments or repeated indulgence.

Assembly line to churn out 0.5m Chromebooks a year

Dar hails Google's move to expand its footprint in Pakistan

By Kalbe Ali

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan remains committed to building a digitally inclusive and AI-ready Pakistan, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar said on Tuesday as he inaugurated the Chromebook Assembly Line.

The new assembly line, located at the National Radio & Telecommunications Corporation's (NRTC) Haripur facility, will produce up to 500,000 Chromebooks annually.

These devices will be high-quality, secure, and affordable, and tailored specifically for educational and public sector use.

Google has unveiled plans to deepen its local presence to provide on-the-ground support to Pakistani businesses, helping them scale their operations and reach global markets.

DEPUTY Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja pose with a Chromebook. — X/MOITofficial

Speaking at the occasion, Mr Dar said the 'Digital Nation Pakistan' vision "reflects our resolve to empower our youth with digital skills, equip them with modern tools, and ensure equal access to opportunities".

He said that Google's decision to strengthen its local presence in Pakistan is not merely symbolic; it was a moment of national pride and a powerful endorsement of Pakistan's digital potential.

Speaking at the ceremony, IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja highlighted the importance of developing domestic hardware alongside software capabilities to empower youth with the skills and tools needed to compete globally while strengthening Pakistan's technological sovereignty.

"This initiative advances our goal of a future-forward, AI-enabled digital nation, bringing together education, technology, and manufacturing. Locally assembled, affordable Chromebooks will help digitise classrooms, expand access to AI-powered learning, and support the national Digital Pakistan and AI Policy." she added.

Google Pakistan Country Director Farhan Qureshi said that Pakistan has vast potential, and Google could help build an inclusive digital future in this AI-powered economy. He added that Google is working towards a stronger local presence in Pakistan — one that will serve as a hub for innovation, partnerships, and economic opportunity.

IHC orders lawyer's meeting with Imran in tweet case

Aleema vows to continue struggle for her brother even if jailed

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday directed the Adiala jail authorities to ensure that senior lawyer Salman Akram Raja is allowed to meet PTI founder Imran Khan, in connection with a case concerning a petition seeking a ban on anti-state content from being shared through the PTI founder's social media account.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir issued the directive while hearing a petition related to the X account operated in Imran Khan's name. The court also instructed the Deputy Attorney General and the state counsel to immediately convey the order to the jail administration through a phone call.

A two-page written order was later released, directing the Additional Attorney General to inform the Adiala jail superintendent about the court's instructions.

During the hearing, Advocate Raja informed the court that despite repeated court orders over the past several months, he had not been allowed to meet his client. He argued that without consulting the PTI founder, he could not respond effectively to the petition. "I need to sit and take instructions from the founder of PTI," he said.

Justice Arbab Tahir remarked that the court had already permitted such meetings and questioned whether the counsel had received the written order of the larger bench. Mr Raja said that although an application for the copy had been made, it was not provided.

The court then reiterated that the jail authorities must ensure the meeting takes place on Monday and that the order be communicated to the concerned officials without delay.

Aleema's media talk

Following the proceedings, Mr Khan's sister Aleema Khan spoke to the media outside the court, vowing to continue the legal and political struggle for the PTI founder's release. "We will keep fighting for Imran Khan. You may jail us, but we will not abandon this cause," she said, adding that the authorities' actions reflected "fear of Imran Khan."

Advocate Raja, while talking to reporters, said a citizen had filed a petition seeking deletion of tweets attributed to the PTI founder and a ban on sharing "anti-state" content through his X account.

Four terrorists killed in Kalat gun battle, says ISPR

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Security forces killed four terrorists after a gun battle in Balochistan's Kalat district, the military's media wing said on Tuesday.

According to a statement from Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), an intelligence-based operation was carried out following reports of the presence of terrorists belonging to the "Indian proxy group Fitna al-Hindustan", the term used by the state to refer to Balochistan-based separatist groups.

Troops engaged the terrorists' position and recovered a large quantity of weapons and ammunition from the killed terrorists, who were involved in numerous terrorist activities, ISPR said.

It added that said sanitisation operations are underway to locate and eliminate any other Indian-sponsored terrorists in the area.

Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to the security forces for carrying out a successful intelligence-based operation in Kalat district, *APP* reported.

The president and PM, in their separate statements, praised the forces for killing four India-backed terrorists, calling it a great achievement for national security.

They said that the entire nation stood by the security forces and remained committed to the complete eradication of the scourge of terrorism.

PPP stalwarts wary of 27th Amendment

• PPP Sindh president says unilateral changes to Constitution not acceptable, throws weight behind 18th Amendment • Rabbani says recalling the financial devolution against scheme of participatory federalism • PTI leader calls for consensus before any constitutional tweaks, says it's akin to abolishing Constitution; JI chief warns against its ramifications for judiciary

By Syed Irfan Raza & Imran Ayub

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI: After the government approached the PPP to seek its support for the 27th Amendment, the key party leaders have come out against the proposed constitutional tweaks that are said to be an attempt to roll back the landmark 18th Amendment that ensured provincial autonomy.

The opposition to the proposal came as the PPP's central executive committee (CEC) is set to meet on November 6 to review the government proposal after a PML-N delegation led by the prime minister had sought the party's support for the proposed 27th Amendment.

The early indications suggest that backing the move may not be easy for the party, as dissenting voices have already begun to surface from within its own ranks. Senator Raza Rabbani feared that the wrapping up of the 18th Amendment would lead to extraconstitutional activities in the country.

In a statement, Senator Rabbani said the proposed constitutional amendments of the government, with reference to provincial autonomy, amount to a rollback of the 18th Amendment.

"In the brittle internal political situation, playing with provincial autonomy will cast deep shadows over the federation," he said, adding, "The 18th Amendment disarmed the extreme nationalists of a political discourse; such an amendment will lend vigour to their extra-constitutional activities."

Mr Rabbani said that revisiting devolved ministries will be a financial burden on the federal government. Recalling the financial devolution, he said, will be against the scheme of participatory federalism.

"If the federal government is unable to manage its finances, then let the provinces collect all the taxes and look after federal expenditures through the Council of Common Interests," he added.

Nisar Khuhro, the president of the PPP's Sindh chapter, made it clear that "the party firmly opposes any attempt to roll back the 18th Constitutional Amendment".

"Unilateral changes to the Constitution would not be acceptable," he said while addressing a press conference in Karachi. "The 18th Amendment was passed unanimously through consensus among all political parties after deliberations by a national committee — a consensus that even dictators could not undo. The PPP is categorically against any rollback of the 18th Amendment."

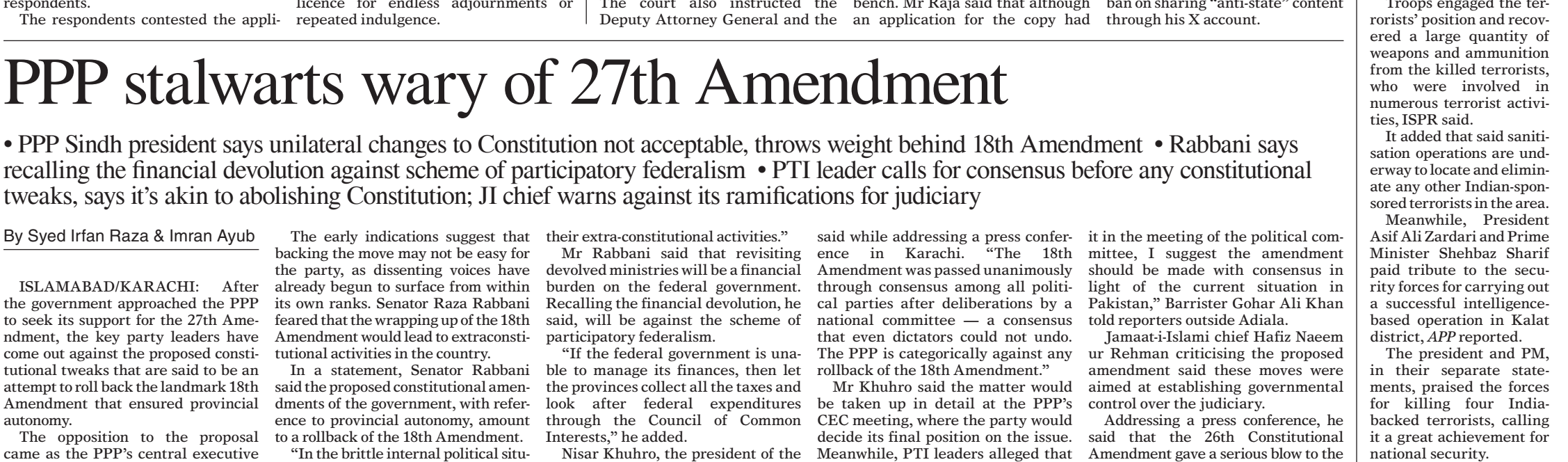
Mr Khuhro said the matter would be taken up in detail at the PPP's CEC meeting, where the party would decide its final position on the issue. Meanwhile, PTI leaders alleged that the details of the 27th Amendment, shared by the PPP chairman, were similar to abolishing the Constitution.

"Although we will give a formal response…after meeting founding chairman Imran Khan and discussing it in the meeting of the political committee, I suggest the amendment should be made with consensus in light of the current situation in Pakistan," Barrister Gohar Ali Khan told reporters outside Adiala.

Jamaat-i-Islami chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman criticising the proposed amendment said these moves were aimed at establishing governmental control over the judiciary.

Addressing a press conference, he said that the 26th Constitutional Amendment gave a serious blow to the judiciary, whereas the proposed 27th Amendment was aimed at establishing the executive's dominance over courts.

Ikram Junaidi in Islamabad also contributed to this report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